Informant:	**LMP-S1**	**Spanish**
Date:	**11-19-00**	**Mini DV**
Interviewers:	**C. Hernandez, M. Jones, P. Polk**	
Transcriber:	**?**	

CH: What do you use the snake for?

S1: It's used so that some people will dominate you. It is good for many things. It can be used for cancer. Some people grill it as when they grill chicken and actually eat it. People cut two fourths of the tail and two fourths of the head and they eat the middle of the rattlesnake. I think the part in the middle is like a fish. It can also be used to make people fight and be abusive or to calm a violent person down.

CH: When you say the snake is used to cause a fight, is it a fight between you and someone else or what?

S1: You put the person's name on the snake's skin and rub it with pepper. It needs to be cut with scissors in little pieces. Everything is set around a black candle. The three peppers, San Alejo's powder or dust from a cemetery's cross. If someone died a while back, the dust from that cross can be used for this. After all is set, you say bad words or anything bad you want that person to experience. If you want something violent to happen or if you want blood in a person's home, then you need to put the ashes of a dead person and the crushed shell of an Indian Creole chicken's egg because it still has the blood in it. Do not put it on a table or on a corner but always by the toilet because it needs to stay as far from you as possible. That is for separating people from each other. It is for people that want to split up from each other, so that they can hate you, they can have problems and they can disappear from your lives. This causes a lot of destruction and friction. Once it is burning you add Vicks.

CH: What effect does the Vicks have on the patient?

S1: It alters the person and it makes this person want to fight.

CH: Do you use peppers a lot? In what other ways do you use them?

S1: Yes, I use them a lot. I also use them to get rid of headaches. But this is the only type of pepper that I use. It is called chile bolita. It is very hot. You can eat and it will not bother the digestive system, but it is very strong. It can also be used to dominate a person, and to eat it.

CH: Where do you get them?

S1: It comes from Guatemala and El Salvador. Someone brought the seeds and planted them here. They gave me some and I also planted them here, so I have my own tree.

CH: Do you have it in your house?

S1: No, it's here. It won't grow in my house because I have too much rue and it won't let it grow. I also have another method of keeping somebody away. Take nine black candles, pray bad things backwards, make two turns around the candles, and blow on the candles. Then write the names of the couple you want to separate and put crosses over them. Then you cut the feathers of a black pigeon into little pieces and put them all around. Write the name of the couple nine times on black India paper. Fold it three times one way, three the other way and one backwards. Put it all the way at the bottom of the candle and spray paint the glass of the candle completely black. Then you start praying whatever you want the couple to argue about so they will hate each other. After this, you need nine black ribbons (narrow ribbons) to tie to the candle with a yellow chrysanthemum flower and then light the candle. Then you start saying, "Just as this flower dries up may the friendship between so and so die off. They should separate within 3,4 or 5 days". You keep repeating "3, 4 or 5 days". But if you say 6, 7, 8 and 9 and you stay in 9, then after 9 days your work will take effect.

P: Do you bring a lot of plants from Guatemala?

S1: No, because what they have in Guatemala can also be found here. There are many plants here that can be used for remedies. Furthermore, when a person is crossing the border, they are not allowed to bring any plants from other countries. I don't want to bring anything just to avoid problems. I already had an awful experience detained at the airport, and I don't want to be sent to jail for a long time. But of course, it would be better if I could bring them straight from over there. In Guatemala you can do a lot of things that you can't do here. One day if you go film in Guatemala you will see for yourselves. You can make fires and sacrifice chickens, but you can't do that here. In Guatemala people can also pull out dead bodies from the graves.

J: Eventually we need to make clippings from the plants you have here to give to a taxonomist to identify. Is this okay?

S1: It's okay.

P: Since you do not bring the plants from Guatemala, where do you obtain your plants?

S1: I tell my customers to bring them to me. For example depending on the job, if they need rosemary. I tell them to bring rosemary, rue or basil. Did I give you a remedy so that people can stop drinking?

CH: No.

S1: If a person drinks a lot because someone did witchcraft on him or her or if he is just addicted, what I do is give this person a common cleanse (limpia). Then I give him blue salt, rosemary, rue or basil to make a bath with them. This is to relax the person. Once the person is sober, I make them come to me again. If he does not want to come here, I'll give him something to put in the food. This is called tripa del diablo. It is a powder and it comes from the tree called *tripa del diablo.* It is not bad for you. But if he comes here, I'll give him the limpia, and then I'll give him a purgative. Sometimes they tell me that they are going to take it home but I don't let them. They have to drink it here because I

know that if they do not drink it here, they are not going to drink it at all. To make the blend I put three peeled garlic heads, nine types of white liquor, rosemary, rue, basil, thyme, and geranium. Then I add drops of lemon and the peel of a purple onion. I also add olive oil and ?(recino) oil.

CH: Is there an instant result after the person drinks the remedy?

S1: The person needs to come drink it here for three or nine days. The person needs to come here because it has a very bad smell and it is very strong and this person is not going to drink it at home.

CH: How do you know if the person is bewitched?

S1: I could see it here in the glass. For example, when someone is sitting here like you and the glass (candle) stars to move a lot, that means it's because there is something wrong. There's nothing wrong with you. You have a very bright future and you live very happy. Therefore, I can see when a person is an alcoholic or if a person was bewitched. If they were bewitched, they get diarrhea with the treatment and if they are just regular alcoholics, the worm inside them comes out. There is a young man that lives around here whose name is Rey. He was a powerful man in Guatemala, he was the mayor of a town over there. But when he came here he began to drink. He slept in the streets, and he was always drunk. He used to sleep in a shelter home on Westchester. One day he became our friend and I gave him two bottles of the remedy and he got cured. Now he is a great mechanic even though he looks a little run down because of the hard life he has lived. Now he even sends money to his relatives in Guatemala. He drives a nice Mercedes and has not drunk for nine months. But, for any one who comes here to be cured, they must listen to what I say. If they have any alcohol when I said not to because they are taking the remedy, they will get poisoned. They won't die but they will get intoxicated.

P: Is alcoholism a problem for many people that come here from Guatemala and try to make it here?

S1: It is a problem for Guatemalans, Mexicans and Salvadorians. If something bad happens they go drink, and if something great happens they go celebrate and drink.

CH: Do you believe this is a problem they bring from back home?

S1: No, it depends who they associate with. If your friends are a bad influence for you, you will become a bad person. If you have friends who are good people, you will become a good person. There are some people that for example accept a drink in a party just so that they won't feel shame for saying no. When a person drinks at parties the day before work, that week they only work three days because they don't feel good. Next week they feel sore so they make up excuses until they do not work at all and they become irresponsible.

P: Do you collect any plants or herbs that you use?

S1: No, I don't collect but I do save the plants themselves or the seeds. People bring me plants or I also try to grow them. At home I mostly have rue and ? (campana). Most of the time I work with rue, rosemary, basil, and alta misa (hierba Santa Maria for Mexican people). Something I use to treat arthritis is yucca. After you peel it, you need to boil the roots and drink it with some salt and take baths with the rest. Some people have eaten the yucca and they've been cured.

P: After you give instructions to people of how to use the herbs, then they can just go to the market and buy them?

S1: Yes, I send them to the markets like Iberio and Numero Uno or to Guatemalan stores. Some of the herbs like rue, rosemary and basil have been discovered by some of these grocery stores and now they have them in their stores.

CH: What other things do you have here?

S1: This is a cream that I prepare for lower back pain. I cannot tell you the ingredients.

CH: What is this?

S1: That is gold dust and a magnet rock. I use it to fix my candles and for some of my works. If a person needs a job, this work will help them find one.

CH: When you fix the candles, do you put the gold dust and the magnet rock, or how does it work?

S1: I pray and I turn the candle seven times clockwise and seven times counterclockwise. Then I ask San Simon in that person's name that he or she gets a job in two to three days. If you ask him for a job he will give it to you. I cured a lady who had leprosy. Her name is Elena Ramirez and she lives in Tijuana. She left me this as a way of thanking me for my help. I have many pictures of people who I've cured if you want to see them. I had them on the walls but I took them down because people ask me why I have those pictures up.

P: We would like to see them.

S1: Okay, some other day that you come, I'll show you the pictures.

P: What is this?

S1: Those are **campanas**. It's a flower that cures everything.

CH: What type of flower is it?

S1: It's a **campana**. I grow it in my house but you can find it anywhere. Are you feeling pain right now?

CH: Yes.

S1: I'm going to put some on you and you are going to feel better.

P: What ingredients do you put in the mix?

S1: It has alcohol, rosemary oil, sesame oil, oak tree oil, and palo oil. I made this remedy.

CH: Oh, you come up with the remedies?

S1: No, San Simon tells me to do this or to do that and I do it to cure people.

CH: So San Simon told you about the campana remedy?

S1: Yes.

CH: How does San Simon tell you to do it?

S1: Some people meditate to talk to San Simon. He comes to me in my dreams. Around five months ago I had a dream with San Simon. I was far away in a hill. There was grass and trees and a wired fence appeared. He was sitting on a chair and he was drunk. I appeared next to him and five women were coming to see him. He told me to cover him because he did not want to see them. I asked with what and a yellow towel appeared and I covered him with that. When the women saw that he was covered, they left. He thanked me and told me that he wanted to talk to me. The wired fence wasn't there anymore. He got up and told me to hold him from his arm, but he wasn't drunk anymore. It seemed as if he was going to throw up. He was wearing a pair of short, blue pants and a small, worn out jacket. He was also wearing a pair of rubber boots. He looked around 30 years old. He had dark brown skin, like an Indian and was growing a mustache. He asked if I knew who he was. I said no. "I'm Simon and I want to talk to you" he said. We walked and he asked me if I saw what was there. There were small fires with green candles. He told me that that arrangement was for people who need jobs. On this side there were two women and a couple of red candles. He said that that arrangement was for love or for couples that wanted to be reunited. They were like small volcanoes with sugar. Up here there was a cross with white salt and a black shadow on top. This was used to cause deaths. We kept walking, and there was a female and a male organ to cause people to become impotent. Five months ago I had this dream. I held him from the arm because I thought he was going to throw up or go urinate. He said that he did not need to throw up or urinate. He was just very happy to be with me. He made the gesture as if he was going to throw up and a purple candle came out of his mouth. He said that was what was wrong with my friend and that I should let her know that she's cured. He started running around me like a little kid because he was very happy. He tells me what is going to happen. He always tells me things in dreams but I don't always remember. In another dream, I had a black tablecloth with red on the edges and a black triangle. No one would come to consult. I asked him why that was happening and he told me that it was because of the black tablecloth. He wanted me to take it off the table and put a white one. The next morning I went downtown at six in the morning and I bought a white silk tablecloth. I asked someone to sew it, I washed it, and I put it on the table. I told him that I had

bought a new one. Then I heard the noise of scissors by the door as if something was cut and a lot of people started to come for consultation. If he does not like something he will tell me.

CH: Do the crosses you are drawing on your hands have any significance?

S1: I always draw them when I am working and I stick pins in my fingers. I don't do it often because my son gets mad at me.

CH: Why?

S1: Because he says this is bad for me.

P: But why do you do it?

S1: That's how I work.

CH: Is this something that San Simon told you?

S1: Yes. I put them on my fingers to cut anything bad that a person might want to do to me.

CH: Is this like flatulence?

S1: Yes, if you are a very nervous person this takes your nerves away.

P: Are you nervous right now?

S1: No, not at all. I feel as if I was among family. I talk to many interesting people and I don't get nervous. For example, when we go buy a car, they see me and they don't seem to care or show interest, but when they see the money they show interest.

CH: How do you treat diarrhea?

S1: We give them a remedy with mint and anise grains. You boil it for fifteen minutes and you drink it. You make a cornstarch drink.

CH: So you use mint and anise to make the drink?

S1: Yes. This is to treat diarrhea and pain in the kidneys. This is a good remedy for kidney problems, or if they have water in the kidneys- which is something that can turn into leukemia. What they can do is buy four pounds of rice and put it in a container with water and let it sit.

CH: How many times a day does some one need to drink it?

S1: Six or seven; like regular drinking water. Instead of drinking coffee or soda they need to drink this.

CH: I want to ask you something. Last week my sister had food poisoning…

S1: Oh, that's indigestion. She either ate something that was bad for her stomach or she ate too much. The food was not good. When a person is sick like this, what you do is get baking soda and add water without letting it get bubbles and have her drink it. In botanicas they sell Monte incense. It is very good when you boil it and the person drinks it. Another thing you can do is massage her stomach with olive oil and have her drink ? (palo de encino). They need to burn it and put the ashes in a dish. Then you add salt and a teaspoon of olive oil. This helps her get rid of what ever is stuck to her stomach because it helps detoxify.

CH: Would these remedies affect her now that she is pregnant?

S1: No, because the remedies are natural. If it were like penicillin it would, but these won't.

CH: Can the doctor open the door because he can't breathe due to his allergies?

S1: What he needs to do is drink a Coca-Cola with a lot of lemon. He needs to have one of those Mexican coca-colas that have a lot of gas to help him get rid of allergies. It has to be warm but you can boil it. Going back to food poisoning, there is an herb called ?(pericon) or you can also use the ends of three orange leaves to make tea. Only the tips of the leaf can be used. I have other remedies, for example, if a woman wants to sterilize herself what she does is get an avocado, take the seed an sun dry it. After this you take the peel off the seed and take the seed to cut it in the form of a cross and you let it sit in water for three days. Then you boil it and drink this water for nine days.

CH: How many times a day do they need to drink this?

S1: Two to three times.

S1: To make this stronger you can boil three avocado seeds.

CH: I have another remedy for cavities or toothaches. For toothache you get three cloves and boil them for a minute. You do not want to boil them for a long time because this can break your teeth. Then take them out and wait until the water cools down so that you can make gargles with the water. Something else you can do for loose teeth or teeth that are falling off is take encino bark, boil it and gargle with it. It will also help your teeth.

CH: If a person has a very bad toothache or cavity, can this person just put the clover in their mouth?

S1: No because this will break the teeth. What people put in there is tobacco. Tobacco will take the toothache away.

CH: Do you have something for gums?

S1: Some of the things that are good for gums are ? (cancerina) and ? (cascara sagrada). But if you have serious inflammation or cold sores what you can do is take baking soda with lemon and rub it where it hurts. This cleans your teeth and takes off all the inflammation. Another good thing is **cancerina** and arnica. You can make a tea from these two herbs and this will cure internal wounds or scars. For example, if I had a car accident and had pain inside my body, I would drink this tea. But I can also use a warm cloth with this water and apply it to my body where I have the bruises. If someone is being abused by his or her partner, sometimes people end up with bruises. Women are more susceptible to bruises because they have very sensitive skin. They can put a spoon on the freezer and leave it there for an hour then take it out and put it on the bruise and it will go away.

P: Are there a lot of women who come here in search for a remedy so that they won't have kids anymore?

S1: Many women come when they do not want any more children. They also come when they need an abortion but I don't give them anything because I do not want any problems.

P: Problems with the law or what type of problems?

S1: Yes, because it is very different here. For example, you give a remedy to a person and the remedy is good but it just didn't work for this person, and then they want to sue me. I also have a remedy for gastritis. You need to cut an aloe leaf in half and take out the jelly it has inside and make a tea without adding sugar or salt and you drink it for nine days. After the nine days, you need to drink ? (epazote de zorrillo) for 20 days. After this you will get rid of stomachaches. If you are throwing up blood, this will get rid of that quick.

CH: How many times a day?

S1: Just like regular drinking water- a big jar.

CH: Did you say there were two types of aloe?

S1: Yes, one that gives flower and one that doesn't. The one that doesn't give flower is the good one.

CH: When you were in the San Simon festival, did you make San Simon water bottles and did you use it to wash clothes?

S1: Yes, but I did not use it for washing San Simon's clothes. This water is for curative plants. I could also give you a bottle and it relaxes the body if you take a bath with it but it doesn't smell very nice. That is for taking away any bad things done to you by another person or if a person can't sleep.

P: What about the San Simon water?

S1: Oh, it's not water, we have a San Simon that we pour liquor to. San Simon drinks it and then we take it and just by passing it through San Simon's mouth, it turns into curative water. You can rub it on yourself or drink it. This has a lot to do with faith. If a person has a lot of faith, this will cure the person, but if there is not a lot of faith the person won't get cured.

CH: Is it vodka?

S1: It doesn't mater but it is usually white liquor. He does not like the kind of liquor that rich men drink, it goes bad. But this really has a lot to do with faith. For example, during the procession there was a car parked in front of the school, and the woman inside this car was invited to come. She was going to have an operation because she was suffering a lot from stomach cancer, she couldn't dance, her bones hurt, she couldn't eat because as soon as she ate something she would throw it back out. All the smoke from the procession went to their direction and it went inside the car and it got very smoky in there. The husband told the young woman to close all the windows and to have faith in the smoke because it would heal her. She did and she said she got goose bumps while she sat there in the car with all the smoke. Then they got out of the car and she felt better and she was able to eat and dance. She ended up canceling her appointment because she didn't think she needed it anymore.

CH: So the alcohol from San Simon is like holy water?

S1: Yes, it's like holy water because it came out of San Simon. San Simon drank it and that is what makes it holy.

P: Does every one at the party drink it?

S1: No, the people who come to the party are not clients. It's very rare for a client to come here and drink; they usually don't drink. In Guatemala they say that the person who works with San Simon has to drink but I don't drink a lot and I work with San Simon.

CH: On the day of the festival when you collect the liquor that San Simon drinks, do you save it for you or do you distribute it?

S1: I save it. It's like holy water and I leave it here for patients whenever I need it. Do you know San Simon of Guatemala, from Sunil? This picture appeared to me here. He is San Simon of Sunil and he drinks. This picture appeared to me here in my altar the day of San Simon. San Simon appears with different attire in different places but it is always the same San Simon. This one is the one I told you about last time that he left on the horse.

P: Does he have sunglasses on?

S1: Yes, that is what people like.

P: Why?

S1: We always dress him different because people come and bring him clothes and they dress him to their style. The same goes for the one in Guatemala, they dress him different. For example, the president of Guatemala has left him his suit.

CH: Do you give him the best?

S1: The best we can. We don't ask people to bring him clothes. They bring them because they want. The San Simon suits cost a thousand dollars. He is a very miraculous saint. San Simon is alive; this San Simon has a bed. There are two attendants who pick him up every day and put him to bed. Every hour they lift him up and give him a drink so that he can get rid of his hangover. Every day at eight in the morning they give him liquor and they feed him because he works every day.

CH: Where did you find this picture of San Simon?

S1: Here in the store, some one left it here. People give a lot of money for him. With this money, people buy bells for the church and property for the indigenous people of that town. They also had enough money to buy a glass coffin for the holy burial of Jesus Christ that is taken to the cemetery on Holy Saturday.

CH: Why do you keep the picture in a bottle?

S1: So that it won't get ruined.

J: There was a dance where one of the woman was on the ground and another woman was dancing around her had a twig in her hand and brushed her with a twig, what is the story of this dance?

S1: That is symbolic of how people come here to get healed. That lady for example, was retelling the story through dance of how she came in very sad because she was pregnant and became dizzy, and how she thought she was bewitched. The other lady was brushing and shaking her with a twig that symbolized rue.

P: How often do you make the baths?

S1: Some times in a year we make around four thousand bottles.

CH: Can we film you some time when you are making them?

S1: Sure.

CH: What ingredients are in there?

S1: This has chilco, rue, rosemary, basil, lemon, salt and oils. The salt is the ingredient that removes the pain.

CH: What kinds of oils do you add?

S1: Work oil is one of them.

CH: Is it blessed?

S1: Yes, I pray over it.

P: Does San Simon help people from Guatemala come to the United States illegally?

S1: Yes, when they are going to travel, they talk to San Simon and they ask for his protection so that they can get here well. Now I'm legally here, but even today I still pray to San Simon on the freeway whenever I come back.

CH: Are there miracle legends of San Simon?

S1: All the legends are in Guatemala. Being here is not the same as in Guatemala. If I want to buy a piece of land in this country to make a church for San Simon, I can't because I would be doing it on my own. In Guatemala, people get together and they buy what they want. All the walls are covered with images and miracles over there. I will ask someone to bring some pictures from Guatemala and I will give them to you.

CH: Is there a place like this in Los Angeles?

S1: Not of San Simon. The only good one that I know of is here with me. I know it is here because this is like the second of San Simon and there is no other one like it. As long as I live there will not be another one like this one because I will not permit it. A lot of people do it for money but I do it for San Simon. Another reason is because I allow people of all races to come and they don't have to pay an admission charge.